Still $1.50 November 1987

MICHIGAN ATARI MAGAZINE

A CO-OPERATIVE PUBLICATION OF THESE ATARI CLUBS:
C.H.A.O.S. (LANSING) -- G.A.G. (FLINT)
T.A.G -- (SAGINAW / BAY CITY / MIDLAND)
B.C.A.U.G. (BATTLE CREEK) -- W.A.U.G. (ANN ARBOR)
G.K.A.U.G. (KALAMAZOO) -- G.R.A.S.S. (GRAND RAPIDS)

Atari News

...and COMMENT by John Nagy

ATARI STOCKWATCH: Surviving BLOODY MONDAY and the aftershock, ATARI stock is at this writing at $6.50, down by more than half of only a month back. Still, it nets out to over 10% growth in the year since ATARI went public, and we all expect at least SOME recovery of the market. However, ATARI's purchase last month of FEDERATED electronics stores with excess onhand capital may prove to have been ill-timed, as massive stock market downturns generally result in reduced consumer spending... and had ATARI waited, FEDERATED might have been a real STEAL about now.

PRODUCTS: Actually shipping. A MAM subscriber obtained an SX-212 modem from COMPUTABILITY a few weeks ago... but still no 8-bit software. MEGAs are showing up, but still mostly leaked-out DEVELOPERS models. The MEGA may be the best sales tool ever for the 1040ST... with the 16% program failure rate due to new ROMS and the MEGA price ($2,000), the 1040ST is getting a surge of popularity making it VERY hard to find now. NOT shipping yet: the ATARI PC, the LASER PRINTER, the 8-bit disk drive.

NEW PRODUCTS ANNOUNCED, take 8,976... We mentioned the Compact Digital Disk ROM device ATARI plans to have out "soon" ($650!), now heres two more:

* A 10-MIP (million instruction per second) UNIX-like graphics workstation for under $5,000. It should be shown at the winter COMDEX show, and is hoped for production in mid '88 for marketing initially in the ATARI-favorable atmosphere overseas. The price is high to us home-types, but DRAMATICALLY below anything similar available today.

* The IBM HARDWARE EMULATOR BOX for the ST is on the front burner again at ATARI. If released, it will likely be FASTER than a normal CLONE and perhaps more versitile than the PC:DITTO package. Still, PC:DITTO is hard to beat at the price.

Minor bugs are getting full and fast attention from PC:DITTO folks at AVANT-GARDE. The incredable $89 IBM emulation software for the ST is known to run EVERYTHING any CLONE can, but doesn't like some CLONE DOS's (ZENITH, PC's LIMITED, BLUE CHIP, HITACHI). Formatting a virgin disk in IBM form also generates an error. And, the current version only supports COLOR MONITORS. Patches and fixes are being distributed, with an UPDATE scheduled for late this year that should also give MONOCHROME support. AVANT-GARDE, 381 Pablo Point Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32225. (904) 221-2904.

DATA PACIFIC, makers of the MACINTOSH EMULATOR (MAGIC SAC), has had problems with BAD CHIPS, stalling the expected October release of the TRANSLATOR ONE, a device to allow normal ST disk drives to read MACINTOSH disks. DATA's DAVID SMALL is smoking (as are the ruined circuit boards) but hopeful that not much more time will be lost.

Speaking of EMULATORS, DAREK MIHOCKA's ST-TRANSFORMER (8-bit ATARI emulator for the ST) is now being circulated in the public domain, and getting much better reviews now that the MORE COMPLETE version is being seen and tested. Expect more development, as interest is just as high as we expected.

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CASTLE COMMUNICATIONS

M.A.M. this Month

Editors:
Rich and Judy Barnes (517) 349-0513

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This publication is the official newsletter of several independent groups of Atari 8-bit and 16-bit computer users. It is intended for the information and education of their members as well as the dissemination of Atari related information. Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the respective author and are not in any way official opinions of the associated user groups.

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Publisher's Note

by JOHN NAGY
(517) 487-5646

Breaking up is hard to do...

HA! But really, it is. This is the last issue of MICHIGAN ATARI MAGAZINE that will be published by the original Lansing crew. I was one of the few C.H.A.O.S. club members that got the ball rolling that ultimately became what you have in your hands now... And it's NOT easy to let go.

But the time has come. Burnout is more than a future threat- it is here. Better to turn things over to an enthusiastic new group before the project advances past the "burden" stage and on into the "pain" stage. Especially since such an entusiastic group is NOW presenting itself; this opportunity might not come again soon!

Beginning with the DECEMBER 1987 issue, MAM will be the adopted child of BILL and PATTY RAYL, members of both WAUG (Ann Arbor) and MACE (Detroit). On their adgenda is a proposed merger with the MACE JOURNAL and possible incorporation of GLASS (Detroit's ST club) and, with any luck, CACE (Jackson)(again). A circulation of over 1,500 is possible.

So, expect CHANGES. What you have seen so far has been largely MY vision of what MAM should be... with new management comes a new vision. I hope that all member clubs will be as supportive and as outspoken about the magazine with Patty and Bill as they have been with me. (YIKES! How's that for a mixed message?!)

As for me, I will now actually have time to WRITE more than a few lines and compilations for the magazine, as I have a stack of clippings and notes for MANY articles that have been patiently awaiting their turn... so you haven't seen the last of me.

This MAM project has been one of the most satisfying (and time consuming), educational (and frustrating), and creative jobs I have ever had. I am happy to have have done it; I am at once happy and sad to pass it to another. Long may it grow and prosper.

* * * *

While pondering my own history in CHAOS and MAM, I also recollect the final moments of other ATARI (and other) CLUB officers I have known. The symptoms of BURNOUT form a relatively standard set of events and attitudes that merit comment. Here's a typical and non-comprehensive review:

1. Only people who BURN can BURN OUT. The occasional volunteer (OH TO BE ABLE TO KEEP MY HANDS IN MY POCKETS AND MY WORDS IN MY MIND!) somehow knows his (her) limits and can say NO when it is appropriate. Others are habitual DOERS that can't let things slide.

2. Real DOERS can't just do ONE THING for a club. The Librarian becomes the SYSOP/Librarian, then the President/SYSOP/Librarian. The Treasurer adds the publications co-ordinator duties. The editor becomes the Vice President. More and more, fewer and fewer people do more and more jobs.

Condition 2 above has several results:

3. Things GET DONE. Prosperity and MOVEMENT mark the early stages of the consolidation of jobs in the small, active, resposible, enthusiastic group.

4. "Regular" members get used to watching the progress, usually quite pleased at the results. They volunteer less since, after all, the DOERS know what needs to be done, and are doing great.

5. The DOERS get used to making decisions for the group. It is only natural that the ones doing the bulk of the work should determine not only HOW to do it, but WHAT to do next. In fact, the "regulars" will encourage the DOERS to use their own judgement, and not bother them with trivial votes, etc.

6. More praise and recognition is given to the DOERS for remarkable accomplishments. The DOERS realize that they individually are making the club a success. At about this point, practices within each division of activity are becoming familiar enough to become ritualistic.

7. What were once exciting challenges become everyday duties for the DOERS. The thrill may be gone, but it is replaced with pride and confidence.

8. Eventually the constant run of duties becomes a perceptable drain. Tasks that once kept the DOER up all night in creative frenzy now wait for a night with nothing really good on TV. After all, this is a volunteer job, right?

9. Things slow down for the club. Some things go out late. Some never happen at all. The DOERS get mad because nobody seems to want to help. The membership isn't used to having to help. The membership isn't pleased to be bawled out for being "regular" members.

10. Stirred by the bawlings and seeing an opening, some new people come into the ranks of the DOERS, eager and inexperienced. The DOERS have little patience with this, and even less interest in changing anything from the way they have developed so succesfully.

11. Resentment becomes the new bylaw of the organization. DOERS think they are being pushed or replaced with incompetent newcomers, or else they think that nobody cares about what they are doing enough to become involved. The new DOERS get disillusioned by the resistance from the old DOERS and either revolt or retreat. The "regulars" begin to drop out, because they see no movement, because they dislike the "elitest" attitude of the officers, or in order to avoid being assailed by the DOERS.

Finally,

12(a). The original DOERS resign, disappointed to see that support just "wasn't there anymore" for what was once, after all, a GREAT club...
(or)

12(b). The Club folds up.

Now this scenario sounds pretty grim, but it is and has been the fate of a number of our sister clubs and organizations. It isn't always this way, of course. We have the power to recognize ourselves in one of these stages and redirect ourselves to a different outcome.

I think I have spotted a singular common indicator of IMMINENT BURNOUT: When an officer (or director) simultaneously complains about too much to do, but refuses to allow others to help in THEIR OWN ways. That's STAGE 9 or even 10, and the end may be near.

For myself, I see that I must retreat from a DIRECTOR to a PARTICIPANT while I still can enjoy participation. As much as it will tug at me to volunteer both advice and effort on each and every project the club takes on, I will have to meter my involvement. Other officers will have to arise from the "regulars", and they will have to make their own policy and procedures. I won't like them all, but not everyone liked all of mine, either.

It is a hard lesson for a DOER, and one that goes against reason: Often the only way to assure that a job is done, or even to determine if it needs to be done at all, is to NOT volunteer for it.

Not everything NEEDS to be going smoothly in a club... not every project HAS to be a roaring success... not EVERY owner needs to be IN the club... for the club to be an active, fun, and profitable part of every member's life.

None of this should be taken as a discouragement to people who have and will put massive efforts into their clubs. Without them, the really GREAT things that some of our ATARI clubs have accomplished would simply never have been possible. But beware courting BURNOUT. You may burn more than just yourself!

CAPITOL HILL ATARI OWNERS SOCIETY

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C.H.A.O.S. is the CAPITOL HILL ATARI OWNER'S SOCIETY, serving the ATARI community of the Lansing, Michigan area. The CAMPUS HILL ATARI OWNER'S SOCIETY is the Michigan State University chapter of C.H.A.O.S.

Membership dues are $12.00 per year and entitle the member to a 1 year subscription to the Michigan Atari Magazine, a free disk from our regular library, access to our other libraries and facilities, as well as access to our other resources. Dues may be paid at any C.H.A.O.S. meeting or by mail. If not using an official Membership Application, please include your Name, Address, Phone and a list of your equipment and interests.

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General meetings of the membership take place several times a year. 8-bit and 16-bit Special Interest Group meetings take place monthly. S.T.IN.G. (S.T. INterest Group), for Atari ST owners, meets on the SECOND Saturday of the month. The 8-bit SIG Atari, for 400/800, and XL/XE owners, takes place on the THIRD Saturday of the month. The meetings take place at the MSU Physics-Astronomy Building, Physics Road, Room 118. Meetings begin at 10:00 am sharp and last until 1:00 pm. Members and guests are welcome to any SIG meeting that interests them. To get to a meeting, take East Grand River to the Collingwood Entrance for MSU. The first available left turn is Physics Rd. The Physics-Astronomy Building is about 1 block from the corner, on the right hand side. Park in the gated lot just past the building.

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ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICERS OF CHAOS

Position	Name	Phone #
President	Leo Sell	349-0404
Vice President	John Baker	641-4430
Sec'y-Treasur.	Gary Ferris	393-2593
8-bit Rep	Marvin Goldstein	332-4160
16-bit Rep	John Johnson	355-4219
Membership	Gary Ferris	393-2593
Library Mgr.	John Baker	641-4430
ST Librarian	Sally Nagy	484-1976
XL/XE Librian.	Bill Johnson	675-7166
Publ. Librarn.	Richard Evans	351-2381
ST Publ. Libr.	Chet Kapusinski	676-4539
XL/XE SIG Cor.	Guy Hurt	484-7675
ST SIG Coordn.	Brian Goluska	332-4415
BBS Sysop	John Nagy	487-5646
BBS Librarian	John Lewis	339-1793
Newsltr Editor	Rich Barnes	349-0513
Advertising	Jeff Bone	321-5510

Presidential Address

By Leo Sell

First of all, I believe I have been remiss with some thank yous!! A note of thanks is due the people who helped with the Magic show earlier this fall. Thanks to everyone who donated the use of equipment, time and effort. Thanks also for the good work in making up show disks, et al. Another special note of thanks to Guy Hurt for all of his work again this year in assisting with the Auction. And thanks to all of you who bought and sold. Lots of hard work, time and fun was had by all.

On the news front, we have a new 8-bit Publications Librarian: Innaiah Pothacamury, 332-0558. Thank you Richard Evans for your YEARS of hard work and service. And thanks to Innaiah for taking over.

The other major news is a slight increase in club dues. Dues will be $15.00 per year after the January SIG meetings. Renew by January 16, 1988 and save $3.00. Get your nonmember friends to join too!! Other changes are under way and we will need you to help us out. This is your club...make it work for you...

Meeting Minutes

8 - Bit Minutes
by Gary Ferris

October brought the CHAOS annual auction and it was was a wild one indeed. Buyers found excellent bargains and sellers got part of their invesment back on items they no longer needed. As usual Malcolm Cleveland was the big buyer (tell him it's a bargain and you can sell him anything). The club treasury is almost $300 richer as a result.

OCTOBER ST-UTTERINGS
by Brian Goluska

Even though we are not committed to having a monthly ST disk of the month (DOM), Sally Nagy put together a whiz of a disk for October. For general usage, it has a desk accessory for copying or formatting disks from the desktop (have you ever run out of space to save a file on disk, with nothing but unformatted blanks around?). Then a public domain spelling checker, not interactive, but a nice stand alone program that will spell-check a text file that was created by other programs. Third was a financial package written in GFA Basic that provides all the necessary calculations - loan amortization, cost basis, future value of investment, etc. This looked like a conversion/duplication of an earlier Atari basic financial package.

Most impressive on the DOM was a slideshow of pictures made with the commercial SPECTRUM 512 program. These pictures show 512 simultaneous colors on the ST monitor. On the lower resolution TV screens, these pictures were still impressive. (Note: Published ads for SPECTRUM 512 say that it will not work on machines made before 12/85, without an MMU chip upgrade. The slideshow program does indeed fail on my oldest 512, although it runs fine on my other machines.)

Discussion at the meeting covered experiences with mail order vendors, along with speculation on Atari's new marketing strategies. Rumor has it that Atari is stiffening requirements for stores carrying Atari's, and that the Mega will not be sold mail order. Local sales and support for Atari has been weak for years, and we've always wanted more stores to carry Atari.

Other commercial software demonstrated at the meeting included Pinball Factory, a pinball machine construction and play game, and Airball, a maze game in which the player is a rolling bubble.

See ya at the next St meeting of CHAOS.

Disk Library

ST LIBRARY By Sally Nagy

Come one, come all to our November ST meeting and see the new ST Xformer be put through the paces. It will be our DISK OF THE MONTH. On the disk besides the files that make the Xformer work will be some PD Software that works with it.

New disks this month are as follows:

UTILITIES B19, PROLOG Interpreter. Grab the book, "Programming in Prolog" by Clocksin and Mellish and try it out. There are some docs on the disk BUT they are written in GERMAN. IF SOMEONE CAN HELP IN TRANSLATING THESE IT WOULD BE A GREAT HELP! PLEASE CONTACT ME.

UTILILIES B20, GFA BASIC Tips and Programs.

UTILITIES C18, DISKMECH a powerful disk analyzing, archiving, and editing tool, it has a sector editor, format editor, and more! FILETOOL an accessory that gives gem options for disk options. A New ARCshell which is very small in size but very powerful, and some other FILES.

UTILITIES C19, SUPERBOOT an "all in one" booting program, THEMENU a disk cataloger with a GEM menu of options, FKEYLAB which produces labels for the Function keys, and more...

UTILITIES D2, NOW has the NEWEST version of STWRITER version 2.3 which works on the MEGA ST's. I hope this is the last version for a while.

UTILITIES E4, PUBLISHING PARTNER PRINTER DRIVERS - This disk is also re-worked. If you are looking for a driver check this one out. A new disk is being created with some fonts, etc.

GRAPHIC DISPLAY 12, Features Spectrum 512 pictures....

GRAPHIC DISPLAY 13, MORE Spectrum pictures, Ageis cartoon and misc. demos

GRAPHIC DISPLAY 14, Features Omaha -- a demo of a new card game.

More new files are coming in each week. If you want to see some type of file or files that I am not getting please let me know and I will try and get it. These disks are to be a resource and service to you. Bye now until next month.

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GENESEE ATARI GROUP
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Presidential Address

by Jerry Cross

Gee, my first presidential responsibility. Trying to come up with enough stuff to fill our page of the newsletter. And trying to fill the shoes of Jim! (Gulp!). Well, I promise to do my very best and try to make our club as well known as Chaos or Mace, or maybe even JACG or PACE!

But my first responsibility is to the members of our club. To help me with this job, I have a big favor to ask. I will soon be sending each GAG member a survey. I need to know what you want out of your Atari, your club, and your newsletter. What sort of equipment do you own? What do you plan to buy? Where do you shop for computer programs? Do you use mail order companies? Please fill it out and add any comments you wish. I need to know what you like and dislike about the club. What can we do to improve it? These results will be compiled and shared with other clubs, companies, and Atari themselves!

Also, this is a good opportunity to nag you. But I won't. It seems that every newsletter I have read contains the usual stuff about the members not pulling their weight. You know the line..."This is YOUR club, and if you want it to succeed then YOU have to help out". But I'm not going to do that. While other clubs complain about members not bringing in programs to demonstrate, I not going to. I won't even nag you about writing articles for the newsletter. I'm sure you have programs you enjoy, or knowledge you could share, or hardware you could review, but I don't want to pester you into writing one. You are probably too busy anyway.

All I ask is you make yourself available to answer questions, and attend the meetings. In the past few months our club has signed up several new members. They are looking for help with their computers. They have searched all over Flint for books, and can't find any. The local computer store do not specialize in the Atari and are hard pressed to answer specific questions. So these members come to our meeting (and read our newsletter) looking for answers. I still remember when I joined GAG, and just by listening to other people talk at the meetings, I learned a whole lot. But if only 10 or 15 people show up at the meetings, you don't really learn that much.

I also realize that coming to meetings just to listen to people talk gets awful boring. It would help if someone would demonstrate a program or hardware once and a while. The officers can only come up with so many articles and demo's before they get burned out. Gil is running out of ideas (after 3 years!) and would welcome some help. There is no telling how long I will last.

Anyway, one of the things we are now offering our members is a rapidly growing magazine/book library. We now have a subscription to several 8-bit and ST monthly magazines (with disks), and will loan them to you for one month. We have also received a large number of Abacuss books, mostly concerning the Atari ST. As our club expands, we will look into buying hardware to lend out, such as modems, printers, and disk drives.

Our p/d library is now one of the best in the country. We now receive orders from all over the country (about 2 a week), and it is improving all the time. Our new librarian, Jim Tuma, will continue to add new programs as quickly as we can find them.

I guess I should get down to club business. I think most of the page is filled by now...Here are the results of the October elections. Jerry Cross: President, Dave Pettit: Vice President/ST, Matt Howe: Vice President/8-bit, Jim Tuma & Ed Kalushe:8-Bit Librarians, Gil Merciez and Jack Keeme:ST Librarians, and Nick Klak: Magazine Librarian. Lets give these folks as much support as possible.

Our club now has a post office box. Any request for disks, catalogs, or information should now be sent to: Genesee Atari Group PO Box E Flint, MI 48507.

We will soon be investigating the possibility of buying products on a group purchase plan.

If you have any recommendations, please contact one of the officers.

FACTS BBS has now moved to an Atari ST. It will support the usual Atari line, plus IBM, Mac, and Commodore/Amiga. It can use your support also! If you have any questions about the Atari, most of the club officers regularly log-on and can quickly help you out.

In the near future, you will be seeing changes in the format of the newsletter. I need to know what you would like to see, what you liked about the old newsletter, and what you want changed.

That's about it for this month. Don't miss the November meeting. We will be showing a video tape of highlights of the Atari Magic show, plus a look at a real live (?) Mega-4. Please try to make it!

Genesee Atari Group

Next Meeting
November 11, 6:30pm Neithercut

Genesee Atari Group is a non- profit user group based in Flint, Michigan. GAG meets on the second Wednesday of the month at Neithercut school, 2010 Crestbrook, Flint MI (6:30pm). We also have a 4th Saturday session during the school year at 10 am.

Confused by technical jargon, Jeff attempts an upload.

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Bits and Pieces

FROM THE

Battle Creek Atari User Group

Next Meeting Nov. 12
VO-ED Center, 475 E. Roosevelt

Meeting Minutes

OCTOBER MEETING MINUTES
by Chuck Steele

We had much discussion about about the News letter or lack of the News letter. Several members were upset that we aren't getting the MAM on time. Several members have missed several issues altogether. Dennis made a motion that we give the News letter a few more months so see if there is an improvement. So it was voted that we re-evaluate our association with M.A.M. at the January meeting.

M.A.M. has decided to start publishing the magazine in Ann Arbor starting with the December issue. Hopefully the problem of receiving our News letter after the meeting will be corrected with the Ann Arbor group. They are also talking about changing the price back to $.50. Such a popular idea, are they running for political office?

The October meeting was moved back one week to give more time to get the M.A.M. before the meeting. This got people upset. So we voted to have all future meeting on the second Thursday of each month. This means that our meetings can occur as early as the 8th of the month. Working backwards, this means the M.A.M must be mailed by the 1st of the month, and the paste ups should be to the printer 8 to 10 days before that.(which would be the between the 21st and 23rd of each month.) That leaves a three or four day window for the editor to get his paste ups done, as the dead line for the clubs is the 18th of each month.

Joe has received her new SX212. The modem was shipped without cables and without software. Atari is selling these items separately?? The SX is a 300/1200 baud modem, which follows the HAYES Smart commands, except a few autodial features. Joe hasn't had a chance to use her new modem yet. Lets hope ATARI starts shipping the modem ready to run with software and cables.

Tom and Dan have finished copying the new disks for the library. The new library listing should be out before you receive this. If you haven't received your new library listing, then please call me. Just a reminder about the new rules of the library. If you want a disk out of the library, call Dan Egan or Tom Siemietkowski before the meeting. They will make you a copy which you can pick up at the meeting. Cost of each disk will be one dollar. Starting next month the Disk of the Month will also be $1.00. I encourage each of you to take advantage of our excellent library. You just can't beat the value for the price.

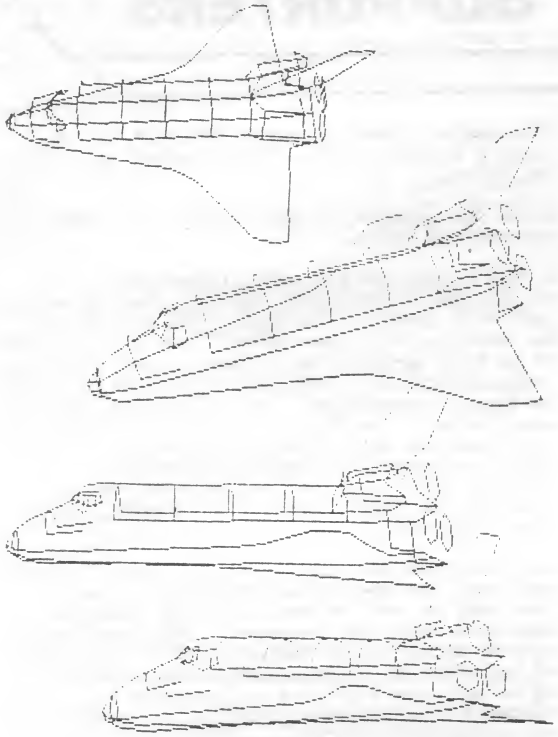
Dennis suggested that membership dues of each member be at the same time. Now the membership dues occur on each members anniversary date. If we adopt this system all members would pay there dues the same month. The advantage of this system is that the membership chairman could easily keep track of who has paid. It simplifies his job and all members know that their dues are due at the September meeting for instance. As new members join they would pay on a pro-rated bases for only the months remaining until the next September. The negative part of this would be a change over period that we would have to go through. We tabled this motion until the November meeting. So come and be prepared to vote. Remember as a BCAUG citizen you have the right to VOTE.

We had a really fast Demo of the Happy. The Happy goes into Turbo speed on reading and writing. It is really fast. It allows you to write to disk without a notch. Several switches and an L.E.D. are added to the front of the 1050 disk drive. These switches allow you to run the Disk drive at normal speed or warp speed, Scotty. The other switch allows you to write to the back of the disk or not. Dan says he has been able to back up all his software.

Tom's Doubler has had problems. He isn't real happy with the way it has worked or should I say not worked, and wasn't able to do a demo of the disk drive. He had to return the first kit as it had a defective chip, and now he is still having problems. It appears that the reliability of these upgrade kits is a big big factor. Thanks to Dan and Tom.

Dan also had an interesting demo program that explained CPR. We also had the DOM. See you at the next meeting and may your BITS all be happy ones.

[Editors note: These graphics were sent to MAM by B.C.A.U.G. President CHUCK STEELE for use in the AUGUST issue, but arrived too late. As we now have room, here they are... refer to the last two issues of MAM for discussion of the SUPER STATE 3-D program used to create thes figures on an ATARI 8-bit machine.]



SUPER STATE 3-D

Several Views of one
3-D File, the SHUTTLE

B.C.A.U.G. OFFICERS:

CHAIRMAN:	
Chuck Steele	964-1701
LIBRARIAN:	
Todd Harris	965-5354
NEWSLETTER:	
Tom Siemietkowski	963-4475
SECRETARY:	
Mike Engle	964-3033
TREASURER:	
Josephine Yeager	968-8401
MEMBERSHIP:	
Dennis Martin	962-1024

GKAUG ATARI GREATER KALAMAZOO ATARI USERS GROUP

Presidential Address

by Daniel Youngs

October's meeting was a Great One!! Alan Lemin brought in his ST and Keyboard, Showing us how MIDI is used. It was a real neat experience. I think that the ST is doing to the music industry the same that the Mac did to desk top publishing.

The new info from our last meeting was:

*BBS as been up and running for over a month and has not crashed once.

*Our next meeting will be on desk to publishing for the 8bit and ST (if we can get an ST). We have several people bring in different printers to compare. We will be demonstrate several programs also.

*I will start my demonstration on Syncalc and Snyfile. I have found a way to transfer Data Perfect files to Synfile so you can convert your old Data Perfect disks.

*We will be looking for new officers to fill the spots left by leaving officers(President for one). We will be talking more about this at the next meeting.

*We are thinking about have a hardware software swap meet if this would interest anyone please let us know. (maybe in December).

*Our next meeting will be November 12 at Dewing Hall. Starting time will be 11:00, see you there.

GKAUG meets once a month on the second Saturday, the starting time is 11:00. Location, Dewing Hall at Kalamazoo College.

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL B.B.S

GRAND RAPIDS ATARI SYSTEMS SUPPORTERS

Meetings

Wyoming Library
3350 Michael S.W.
First Wed. of the Month
Informal meeting: 6:30-8:00
Formal meeting: 8:00-9:00

Presidential Address

President George Nosky
2440 Parkridge S.E.
Grand Rapids MI 49506
616 942 1527

Secretary Charles Baughman
2069 Fawn
Middleville MI 49333
616 795 7373

MEETING NEWS

The meeting was caled to order at 8:00 P.M. by Pres. George Nosky. After the usual reports from the treasurer ect. the discussion centered around what direction the membership would like to see GRASS take. Several ideas were brought up.

1. An Atari fair, possibly at the library.

2. A membership inventory. This would provide members with a source of help to solve problems.

3. Election of officers, we need a nominating committee.

4. Demonstrations at meetings. Several members volunteered?? (they didn't even see the train).

5. Library expansion.

6. Christmas party.

The meeting ended at about 8:55 due to the closing of the library. Ideas seemed to still be coming.

After the membership meeting the board met to discuss the ideas.

1. Atari fair. George and I talked about this at the end of the board meeting. George will call Atari and ask for help. The library will be contacted for open dates. The current idea is to have 10-12 members display their hardware and software on a Saturday. This will have to be heavily advertised. We would like to see everything in the 8bit line from an 800 with joysticks and cartridges hooked to a T.V. to 130's with monitor, multiple disk drives, printer, modem etc. We will probably need a chairman for this project. Call George if you are interested.

2. Membership inventory. We gave George all of our ideas for questions and he will do a draft. This will be sent to the board for additions, deletions, and rearrangement. The questionnaire will be mailed to all members. After the info is collected it will be compiled and printed. It is our hope that this will facilitate hardware and software solutions and answers for our members.

3. Election of officers. We still need a nominating committee.

4. Demos. The feature of the November meeting will be a demo of templates for speedcalc. We have this program in the library and hope to add the templates to the disK. At the December meeting we will see a demo of Atariwriter+. There are no plans for the balance of the year at the present time but we hope to have a demo at every meeting. This necessitates starting the formal part of the meeting at 7:30 instead of 8:00. This may give us more time for discussion and questions and answers.

5. Library expansion. We hope to get the library from CHAOS to add to our club library. Details will be finalized at the November meeting. It looks like we will try to pick up the CHAOS library at their meeting in Nov. and

then several members will meet at my house for a day to dupe the library. We may also add things from Ron's library to ours.

6. Christmas party. Not much interest so the idea was dropped.

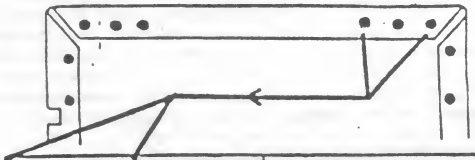
Pirating of programs was also discussed. It is suspected that this may be happening. We see several happy drives etc. Of course NO ONE IS USING THEM ILLEGALLY. The GRASS policy is that the club doesn't condone the copying of copyrighted materials.

If you want something from our library I will have a form for you to fill out and then I will make a copy for you. You can still make copies your self. The cost of copies from the library is $1.50 if I make them. This is payable in advance.

I was impressed with George's organization of the meeting. I hope we can get him to continue in the office of president.

The board was impressed and delighted with the many ideas that you had. We hope they can be carried out and we will work to see that they are.

IDENTIFICATION OF 5¼" DISKS



SEAL	COMPANY	COMMENTS
• • •	MAXELL	
COMPLETE SEAL	MEMOREX	ALSO ALBINAA (BEST CO.)
• •	VERBATIM	
• •	NASHUA	6 dots down each side
	BASF	
	ELEPHANT	
	3M	2 bars down each side
	WABASH	6 sets of 8 sqs. per side
	FUJI	
	CONTROL DATA	STORAGE MASTER
	SYNCOM	3 bars down each side
• •	CERTRON	8 dots down each side
• •	BONUS	
	ICD	4 dots down each side

THIS CHART SHOWS THE NAME OF THE MANUFACTURER WHO MAY HAVE PRODUCED THAT DISKETTE YOU NOW HAVE IN YOUR DISKETTE DRIVE. I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE N.O.V.A. USERS GROUP OF VANCOUVER, WA. FOR THIS CHART PRINTED IN THEIR NOV. ISSUE.

WASHTENAW ATARI USERS' GROUP

The Washtenaw Atari Users' Group is devoted to promoting an interchange of ideas and information concerning Atari micro-computers. Our goal is to aid our members in achieving maximum enjoyment from their investment in Atari computer products. We do this through information in our newsletter and by our monthly meetings. Each meeting focuses on one topic of interest, with program demonstrations and question and answer sessions for both 8-bit and 16-bit machines.

How to Contact WAUG!

Clear Thinking: (313)761-2444
(300/1200 baud)
Molin's Den: (313)420-0407
(300/1200 baud)
Treasure CheST: (313)439-2816
(300/1200 baud)

BY MAIL: WAUG!

3487 Braeburn Circle
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

List of Future WAUG! Activities

Nov. 10: Graphics/Printers
Dec. 8: MidiMaze Fun Night

In Person: Come to a meeting! WAUG! meets the second Tuesday of each month from 7:30 to 10 PM. Meetings are held in Room 2228 of the University of Michigan School of Education, located on the corner of South and East University in Ann Arbor.

By Mail: Send a check for $10, payable to Bob Carlini (our Treasurer), to the WAUG! mailing address. Be sure to include your name, address and phone number. Please include information about your system and interests. Benefits of WAUG! Membership WAUG! members receive the club newsletter, keeping them informed about what's going on in WAUG! and the whole Atari community. Members also have access to the 8-bit and ST disk libraries. These disks are jam-packed with useful and entertaining public domain software. Members pay the special club rate of $2 for 8-bit and $3 for ST disks, and disks may be purchased in person or by mail. The most important benefit you receive is the help and support from (and interaction with) other Atari owners.

TRI-CITY ATARI GROUP

T.A.G. - SAGINAW, BAY CITY, MIDLAND

NEXT MEETING: The Tri-City Atari Users Group meets the second Saturday of every month at 2:00 pm at the Rudy Zauel Memorial Library on the corner of Shattuck and Center in Saginaw. Upcoming meetings are scheduled as follows:

November 14, 1987
December 12, 1987

OFFICERS of TAG are as follows:

LeRoy Valley	President	686-6796
Marty Schmidt	Treasurer/Sec.	792-6029
Al Jennings	8-bit Disk lib.	790-1980
Joe Manelis	ST Disk Lib.	790-0993
George Stuart	News Letter Ed.	892-7545

Club dues are $20.00 per year. For this fee you get the Michigan Atari Magazine. Support for both the 8-bits and the ST's, and full access to the club's public domain library. We currently have about 90 disks in the 8-bit library and 30 in the ST library. You an get copies of these disks AT NO CHARGE if you bring your own disk to copy on (time permitting) at the regular meeting. If you don't have a disk with you, you can get the 8-bit disks for $1.00 each and the ST disks for $2.00 each. Non-TAG members can get copies of the 8- bit disks for $2.00 each and the ST disks for $4.00 each. If you need to renew, do it now! If you haven't joined yet, then do it now!

Letter from the Prez

By now all of you know that there was no October meeting. I apologize, but the library didn't inform us that they were installing new carpet until one week before the meeting. I tried to move it back one week, but the library didn't finish it's renovations in time and that too had to be canceled. Besides, I don't think that anyone got their newsletter in time to know that it would be in the THIRD week in October. Maybe placing the newsletter under new management won't be so bad after all...

Marty Schmidt sent postcards out to inform everyone that the meeting was canceled, but he knew of people that didn't receive them until Saturday. Isn't it amazing how you can send a postcard to Ohio and it gets there the next day, but if you send it across town it takes a week? Well anyway, everything should be back to normal this month. Remember, show up for the raffles!

****

HOT FLASHES FROM THE FUTURE!

The month of November will feature October's selections! Award Ware for the 8-bits and Certificate Maker for the ST.

Both of these packages will be raffled off at the meeting.

TAG INVENTORY:

TAG is now the proud owner of an Atari 800 and an 810 disk drive with several cartridges and programs. What should we do with these precious goodies? Think about it for the next meeting.

****

*** EXPIRATION NOTICE ***

Remember, once your membership expires you'll receive NO more issues of the Michigan Atari Magazine!

NOTE: These are the same people who volunteered for the October meeting. If you can't make PLEASE call me!

8-bit Equipment Volunteers:

Nelson Greene	Monitor
Ted Beauchamp	Disk Drive
Al Jennings	Printer and interface

ST Equipment Volunteers:

Dennis Wright	Monitor
LeRoy Valley	1040ST
Tom Wheeler	Printer and cable

Once again, a big THANKS to all of you who loan your equipment to the club. PLEASE, if you're going to be late, or can't make it, CALL!! It's not fair to the rest of the people when there's no monitor, or drive for the system!

Review

ZENIA XR-100 BARCODE READER
Best Products ($179)
By Jerry Cross

If you were at the recent Atari-Magic show, you probably saw this product being demonstrated. By waving a "wand" over a printed label containing a bunch of lines, you found out if you were the winner of a prize. What you may not have noticed is this was being done with an Atari computer!

Until now, barcode readers were developed for business applications, which means they were made for mostly IBM computers (for well over $400). But now, Xenia has come out with an inexpensive one for the Atari computers. Now, businesses can use the Atari to maintain inventories, simplify their bookkeeping, or any of a number of uses.

What a barcode reader does is "read" a pre-printed label containing data in the form of lines. Do not confuse this with the barcodes on many grocery products. Those are printed in a different format and can not be read with this barcode reader. But it works much same way.

The barcode "wand" consists of a gadget about 5 inches long, and 1 inch thick. It plugs into the joystick port of your Atari, and comes with a 4 foot cable. It is very easy to use. Simply hold the button on the wand while slowly moving it over the barcode to be read. If it reads it correctly, the computer will continue on with it's next task. If not, you will hear a bell which tells you you moved over the code too fast. With some practice you can quickly read a number of codes without error.

The entire package comes with an instruction book, and a disk containing the handler programs, label printout program, and a simple barcode test program. The instruction manual was informative, but was a Xerox'd copy instead of a nice handbook.

There are two different handler programs designed to work with just about any DOS you plan to use with the program. They recommend DOS XL because it uses up less memory. If you plan to use another DOS, there are instructions explaining which of the two handlers you should use, plus any other information needed to get the barcode program running. The same goes for the Language you are using...i.e. Atari Basic, Basic XL/XE, Turbo Basic. A lot of testing was done to be sure it was compatible with many configurations.

One problem that was discovered while using this was with smeared labels. If your label is not completely dry you may accidentally smear the label, and the barcode reader has problems reading it.

This product has a lot of uses. You can easily control inventory by reading a label on a shelf, then entering the number of that product. This is done at many grocery stores. Another use is to label each product and read it at the checkout line, also like the department stores.

The first thing I did was to write a program that could be used at our club meetings. By reading a barcode located on your membership card, then reading a barcode on a magazine from our library, you can quickly check out magazines or hardware without a lot of bookkeeping. The members no longer would have to stand in line, but can check them out themselves.

Writing programs is fairly easy. The handler program inputs a 4 character code, just as though you typed it in yourself using the keyboard. By using a special XIO command, you activate the barcode reader, then issue an Input or GET command. Anyone with a little bit of programming experience can write a program to fit their needs.

Sounds pretty good, huh? Well, have you ever read a review of a product where I didn't find something wrong? This is no exception.

My main concern is the lack of software for this product. Remember, you just spent $179. The first thing you notice is you have a product you can't use! Sure, it's a lot of fun running that test program and reading some barcodes. But if you want to use it for your business, you have to either write a data program yourself (not easy for a beginner) or find someone to do it for you. There is no support at all from the company, and no companies are writing software to support it.

One of the reasons is the very strict copyrighting rules for software developers. If

you plan to sell a program for the barcode reader, you must first purchase stickers for placement on EACH DISK you sell (at $9.00 each!). Then you must promise that the retail price will exceed $60, and you must not release the source code.

Now, if you were a developer, would you want to write a program following these guidelines? I don't expect many commercial programs to come out for use with this product.

Another complaint is with the wand cable. It has to be long enough to reach where you are working, but not so long as to get tangled up around your desk. One easy solution is to use a spiral cable (like the telephone receiver cord). As it stands now, you must either move your computer around the store, or bring the products to the computer. Since your Atari is in no way portable, you will soon find your desk very cluttered.

I have other complaint too, but they are sort of minor (like the sloppy manual).

So, if you are looking for a barcode reader, this is a good product. For the price of the Xenia, an Atari computer and drive, you are still well under the cost of a barcode reader for the IBM. But keep in mind that once you buy it, you are on your own. Find someone who knows how to write a program and you are all set.

Viewpoint

My "New" Computer
by Randy Pearson

Yup, I think my computer system is just about complete! I got myself a new computer the other day: An Atari 800.

Ok, so it's not actually new, but it is the computer that I feel rounds out my system.

Yea, I hear you laughing. Or was that a groan? Oh well, no matter. I'm used to it. So far, about all of the computerists that I've informed of my purchase have thought me to be crazy. "Why," they ask, "would you possibly want an OLD (they always emphasize that word) Atari, when you can have an XL/XE?"

Well, here is my answer, and I gave it a lot of thought. I compared the XLs and XEs to the 800, and decided that it all boiled down to convenience vs. annoyance.

The only pluses I could find with owning an Atari 800XL (or the modified 600XL I traded for the 800) were the extra 16K of memory, and the expandibility prospects. Ok, so having 64K as opposed to 48K is nice. Paperclip, my favorite word processing program, gives me nearly double the space. I did very much enjoy being all but assured of never running out of space while writing stories. But, to be honest, I never had run out of room on my previous 48K machine before. I came close, a few times, however. And I once used up nearly all of the expanded space on the 600XL. But, upon thinking about it, if I ever DID run out of room, all I would do is simply continue the story after saving what I had finished. Molding them together when printing would be a bit annoying. So I counted that as an annoyance. And as for programs that require 64K to run, I only have two right now: The Eidodon and Print Shop Companion. The Eidolon bugs me, as a game, so I never played it when I had the 600XL, and Print Shop Companion is nice, but certainly not a must. And on the other side of the tracks, I have two programs that simply won't run on the XL: Protector II, which is a cartridge and cannot be 'XLfix'ed, and Aquatron, which also wouldn't boot right. So, I also counted the programs that I can't now use as being annoyances, or more likely, inconveniences. And ok, having 256K would be great! A RAMdisk is a beautiful invention. But since I don't plan to run a BBS with my 8-bit machine, the only logical use for a RAMdisk is for copying disks. And single disk copying is annoying, but not all THAT annoying. Another annoyance, but one that I can live with.

There are many other annoyances that the XLs have, that the 800 does not. The biggest was not having an internal speaker. I like being able to turn my TV set off, and still know that I am hitting the keys (like I'm doing right now, because my stupid TV set likes to emit a high pitched squeal that is a lot like having someone walk up being you, grab the back of your neck, and start squeezing). Of course, my new system will soon have a monitor, so that chahges it from being an actual consideration to merely being another convenience.

Another XL annoyance is the amount of time one must wait after turning off the machine, before powering it back up. With the 600, I would have to wait anywhere from 10 seconds to over a minute (!!) before it would finally stop giving me a black screen, or that near-useless self test. (Which is better, a Memo Pad or the Self-Test? Good question, eh?) The 800 I have now, on the other hand, actually NEEDS to be warm before it'll boot! I have to turn it on, back off, then back on again. Weird. But a definite improvement.

I also think that having to XLfix all the older programs, which I have an abundance of, is

another big annoyance. It's embarrassing to have a friend over, and try to load a game on an XL/XE. First, try it normally. It died. Shoot... Must need XLfix. Load up that... It died... Darn... Forgot to hold down Option... Or did I hold it down when I shouldn't have?

The 800 has a much nicer, sturdier keyboard. I will admit that the XL's keyboard isn't bad, but the 800 is superior. Feels better, stronger and 'deeper'. And the XE has the absolute WORST keyboard I've ever typed on! It's the same as the ST, and I extremely dislike typing on my ST. The keys are bigger, sure, but they are closer together, so I tend to hit inbetween keys, or off the edge of a key, and hit both. I rarely do that with this 800.

There are a number of miniscule things that I like about the 800 also, like function keys that stick ABOVE the surface of the machine, a guarded System Reset key, four joystick, er, controller jacks (as if I have any games that use all four), and a large door covering the cartridge. (My niece and nephew, 6 and 4 years old, would constantly rip cartridges in and out of their 800XL without turning off the machine first. This would always make me shudder, although why I do not know.)

Both machines have one thing, in particular, that the other one does not. "My 800 has TWO cartridge ports," I say boastingly. "Well MY XL has a HELP key," says the average XL owner, while sticking out a tongue and making a razzberry noise. Ok, so the only thing ever made for the right cartridge port is Monkey Wrench, that Basic helper that hardly anyone ever bought. And on the inverse, I've never seen a program that uses the HELP key, either. So take that as you will.

Ok, so the 800's Basic (in cartridge! None of this holding down Option crud! THAT, to me, is an annoyance.) is a bit glitchy. If I remember to save often, and reboot a lot, I'll do ok. The 800 has a lot less interference than the 600XL I had. Well, ok, not a lot, but it's not quite as bad.

And finally, in my ode to the Atari 800, I must say that I just LOVE the shape, the basic look, feel and color of the 800 over the newer machines. Ok, so the 800 is a tank. But can you drop an 800XL on the ground and still have it in one piece? Heck, you can roll your Toyota over the 800 and not bother it (much)! But, simply put, it looks like an impressive machine! It's large, sturdy, built strong, and'll never rust! It looks impressive! I have non-computer friends who chortle at my ST, (and the 600XL I used to own, as well) but 'Ooo' and 'Ahh' at this 800. It looks, to them, to be the most powerful machine they've ever seen. The 600 looked like a toy, basically.

So, after weighing all the conveniences and annoyances, I simply decided that I could live with the 800's few faults, and could live without the few extras that the newer machines have. To me, newer is not necessarliy better! Some day, I'll tell ya why I like the Atari 835 modem over the newer Atari models. Yup, on the edge of your seats, right? <giggle>

(And by the way, I still have 227 lines free in Paperclip! So PPHHHPT!!!)

Programming

Programming Tips and Tricks
By Earl Hill From The SAGE SCROLL Newsletter.

This month we continue with our discussion of some of the finer points of programming the 8-bit Atari. Last month we left off with the use of the LEN function, which is used as LEN(A$). The next useful string function is not a function per se, but is something that is done with strings. This is what is called concatenation, which is a big word to describe putting one thing onto another. As I have said many times, please type these listings in as we go. Take it from me, you will find that this is the best way to learn the finer points of programming. Here is a little listing to show how these two things are put together:

```
10 DIM A$(10) 20 X=LEN(A$):PRINT X
25 REM PRINTS 0 (A$ IS A "NULL" STRING)
30 A$="ABCD":PRINT LEN(A$)
35 REM PRINTS A NUMBER 4
40 A$(LEN(A$)+1)=A$:PRINT A$
45 REM PRINTS AS "ABCDABCD"
50 X=LEN(A$):PRINT X
55 REM PRINTS AN 8
```

The critical concatenation step is in line 40. Recall that, as un-logical as it may seem, the expression on the left side of the equals sign is the DESTINATION; and that on the right is the SOURCE. What this line does is concatenates or "adds-on" to A$. We will say more about this shortly. Where is this used? Loads of places. For example, in getting disk input, where you want to add the number of a drive to an INPUT filename. (Of course, all these strings have been DIMmed earlier on). Look at this code: (BUT DON'T TYPE IT IN).

```
F$="D:":?  "INPUT TITLE"
INPUT Q$:IF Q$="" THEN F$="D:SCREAN.PIC"
F$(LEN(F$)+1)=Q$
F$(LEN(F$)+1)=".PIC"
```

What this sort of thing does (and as I told you. this is stuff which is useful), is automatically

set up INPUT as a filename with PIC as the extender, if <RETURN> is pressed; and if no extender is used, to add one to it as .PIC. Here is another example:

```
10 DIM A$(30),B$(20)
20 A$="RUN":A$(4)=CHR$(34):A$(5,7)="D1:" 30
POSITION 2,10:?  "Enter as FILENAME:EXT <RET> "
40 REM ...MORE CODE HERE...
50 TRAP 50:INPUT B$:TRAP 40000
60 A$(LEN(A$)+1)=B$
70 REM ...MORE CODE FOLLOWS...
```

What we have done here is get a filename INPUT as B$ and by concatenation put it inside a string which says to RUN a Filename. This is from an AUTORUN.SYS maker from one of the early SAGE DON's. The critical line is line 60, where B$ is out of the end of all the other stuff.

Now lets go on with some more code:

```
10 DIM A$(10),B$(10),C$(4)
20 A$="ABCDEF":PRINT A$
30 B$=A$:PRINT B$:REM GIVES ABCDEF
40 C$=A$:PRINT C$:REM TRY IT AND SEE!
```

As I said, the equals sign is not quite as in Algebra, but here indicates a DESTINATION on the left, and a SOURCE on the right. The important line is number 30, for our purposes, and here line 30 defines string B$ by setting string B$ equal to the string A$.

A little more about strings, and then we'll be able to move on to INPUT. Strings can be defined further by using single subscripts. These take the form of A$(4). The (4) is referred to as a subscript. Here's some more code:

```
10 DIM A$(10),B$(10)
20 A$="12345678":PRINT A$
30 B$=A$(4):PRINT B$:REM ..TRY IT..
40 B$=A$(5):PRINT B$
50 B$(5)=A$(5):PRINT B$:REM ..TRY IT..
60 B$=A$(0):PRINT B$:REM ..AND THIS..
70 B$=A$(9):PRINT B$:REM ..AND THIS..
```

The important line for our purposes is line 50, which illustrates the definition of a DESTINAtION substring,B$(5), with a SOURCE substring A$(5). This operation combines the two substrings to define string B$. To concatenate two strings without losing any characters, the substring of the destination substring must be equal to one plus the character length of the current destination string. For example, in line 50, since the character length of B$ is 4(before line 50 was executed), the destination subscript must be 5. This explains why you see the code, e.g., of A$(LEN(A$)+1).

That's about it for this short introduction to strings. Just for the record, lets define a string with double subscripts. This takes the form Q$=A$(3,5). The double subscript method is useful for examining user INPUT, or user response as in these lines of code:

```
10 DIM A$(5)
20 PRINT "Do you want to continue?  Y/N"
30 INPUT A$
40 IF A$(1,1)="Y" THEN 100:REM ..GO SOMEWHERE
ELSE..
50 END
```

This is nice because only the first letter of the response needs to be checked. I suspect this is enough of this stringy stuff for this month. Next month we will continue with inputs. I think you can see from the above example how this ties in with strings.

Just Starting

JUST FOR FUN...
By Jerry Cross

Where do computers come from?

Hey, this is serious! I was sitting around the other day, just letting my mind wander around...and it occurred to me that I have never seen a computer factory. Have you? I mean, I've seen car factories, cereal factories, furniture factories, but never a computer factory.

It got me to wondering...like when I was a kid and I asked my folks where babies came from. They said the stork brings them. Well, I got out my picture book and, there it was! A stork! And I could even go to the zoo and look at one. They got mad at me once because I let one loose. I said to them "How's it supposed to deliver babies when it's locked up like that!" Then after I grew up a bit I saw this fat lady and said "Look mom, she ate too many Big Macs, huh?" "No" my Mom said, "She's about to have a baby." "Cover your head, Ma!" I screamed "Those storks are ten times bigger then pigeons, and I saw what pigeons can do to a car!"

"No, storks don't bring babies, she has the baby in her stomach." said my Mom. "She will soon go into the hospital and they will take the baby out."

A few years later I had my sex education class. They explained it all to me. They showed me some pictures of a hospital room, with the doctors in their white robes and equipment all over the place. The room was real clean because, they said, they had to keep the dust

out. Dust carries germs, and we didn't want the baby to catch a bug, did we? And when the baby comes out, the doctor would put it on an examination table to make surit was healthy.

So, I learned my first lesson. Don't ever believe your parents. So when my Dad told me that computers come from computer factories, I said "Sure Dad! And I believed you about the Storks. So where is this computer factory?"

"It's in Singapore" He said.

Huh? Singapore? The same place that makes those stupid umbrellas they put in drinks? The place that makes those shirts that are two sizes too small? That's where my Atari came from? "Oh, come on Dad...."

So, I went and got out my picture books again and looked up computer factories. And there, in full color, were pictures of a computer factory! But it didn't look like a regular factory.

Everyone inside had on white coveralls, and white hats and gloves....just like a hospital! And they had all these gadgets with lights and they beeped all the time...like a HOSPITAL!!! And the room was real clean..LIKE A HOSPITAL! I guess they wanted to keep the dust out to keep those bugs out of the computers. And when a computer came out, it was put on a table and they check it to be sure all the parts were there and everything worked.

So that's where they come from! I knew they didn't come from Singapore! So I took a trip over to the hospital but they wouldn't let me into the computer delivery room. The nurse acted like she didn't even know what I was talking about! I showed her my picture book, and told her story about the fat lady. She smiled and told me to sit down and someone would come and take me to the computer delivery room. Then she called someone and said in a low voice "I think you lost one of your patients! Can you come and pick him up?"

Well, by this time it was getting late, so I took off. But at least now I know where they come from. Now for the big question...How do they, er, how can you tell which is, ummm, do they do it in the dark....

Nuts, more questions. Hey Ma!!!

ANSWERS TO FLOW CHART PUZZLE (page 29)

1. B,C,D,E
2. X<O,Y≠ O,Z>O
3. A,C,D,G
4. NOT POSSIBLE.

Review

GFA COMPANION
(For Use With GFA Basic Interpreter.)
By John Holder,
Marathon Computer Press.
Distributed By Michtron, Inc.
Reviewed By Frank and Sally Nagy

GFA COMPANION: a creative JEWEL: Nine Kinds of DIALOG BOXES!

This Dialog Box Source Code Generator and Language Tutorial, with Source Code Libraries, takes the burden out of dialog box construction.

As the name suggests, the COMPANION supports the INTERPRETER with two disks packed full of support goodies and an additional 84 page manual.

GFA Basic Interpreter owners will find this program affords most of the classical Resource Construction Set functions used by "C" programmers.

GFA COMPANION is designed for the beginner to intermediate programmer to cut the time and hassles associated with programming in GEM.

One, of it's two disk set, is jammed with libraries for AES, BIOS, GEMDOS, VDI and XBIOS; sample programs, topical GFATIPS and a helpful list of reference texts.

Then the Programs Disk, gives six tutorials lending further support to the owner's manual.

The GFACLIP acts as a "glorified scratch pad" able to pass data between programs, allowing shorter graphic image loading times. (The 64K "board" can hold two D.E.G.A.S. Screens.)

Create nine different dialog boxes:

A "credits option" has room for a title width of 40 characters. Select font styles: normal, bold or italics; and add up to 12 additional lines.

Create a complete online help routine of up to 42, 12 line boxes of information. Advance to the next page or flip back to previous ones.

Make vertical information boxes for displaying program commands.

Create horizontal information boxes when you don't want to obscure the entire screen.

Build specialized boxes with multiple buttons. Label them Alpha or Num. Paste sliders to boxes.

Display different Resolution Overlays to create dialog boxes usable in all resolutions.

In addition, all function keys and any available key on the keyboard can be redefined to meet needs of a given application.

GFA COMPANION is available from Michtron for $49.95.

Viewpoint

Atari Magic Poop

An editorial by certain members
of the ATARI MAGIC staff

Here's the scoop on the poop from Detroit's ATARI MAGIC Show, with a lot of editorializing mixed in! (that's what this column's all about). Much of this is taken from when MAGIC's beloved systems monitor (and show floor manager) held court in the Hilton Penthouse for visiting user groups.

Hybrid Arts (HA for short)-what more can be said? These folks are more than ridiculous to deal with. We got little advance cooperation before the show, and none at the show. All this stems from Bob Moore's (HA founder) absolute refusal to accept their booth location, even with their prior knowledge. We even gave them a most favorable position in their area (with quick access to their midi maze and Atari). We stuck midi-folk together to abate the loud noise (ahem, "music") that comes from their area. We knew this from driving many miles to other shows. We did our homework...'but, noooooo!' Mr. Moore told us we were wrong; there would be no noise problems.

Basic Bits and Bytes was first. Then Sector One. Then Atari's Sandi Austin personally approached us and asked the permission of the floor manager to tell HA to cool it. No such luck, as HA continued to blast the show floor with simulated explosions, jazz riffs, and other noises. Our repeated requests to them were obliged for durations no longer than 15 seconds-the time it took to walk away from them.

With cooperation like this, can you imagine how unforgiving their software must be? They even had the gall to complain about the other "noise" in the hall being too loud! Our hands were tied, however, as HA didn't see fit to pay for their booth until halfway through the show, and we would have lost $$$'s by telling them to pack up and go. We would have also lost Midi-Maze and its +$900 prize. Somebody let us know if the guy who won ever gets his stash!

My advice to future show givers: don't waste your time with these bums. Midi-Maze is being publicly sold (as of this show), Dr. T and other midi software manufacturers are more than happy to attend (with more advance notice than what we gave them). Now for headache number two...

NO SHOWS-Analog Magazine told us on three different occasions "yeah! we'll be there!" [those occasions: Pittsburgh Atarifest, Buffalo Atarifest, and CES in Chicago] Well, they weren't. It's tough when you count on support in dollars and attendance, and don't get it. At least they published our dates, and we do appreciate that. Vacations, however, don't cut the mustard as excuses (Mrs. Walnum's expected child does, tho). Also in the same shakey boat lies the "New Aladdin" magazine.

Some "no-shows" not only embarassed us, but themselves, as well. Virtusonics paid and missed not only MAGIC's show, but the previous show in San Jose. Also paying and not showing were TDI (who in the *?@! are they) and PCA. PCA sweet talked us into reserving a booth for them for $200 less than the full rate. They pooped out-we lost money on that one.

It's too bad that these corporations don't realize that these shows are not being put on by professionals. Little user group members like you and I stick our collective necks out for Atari's show and marketing folk without too much help. Oh, by the way, Atari, your promised advance monies finally arrived--about five hours in advance of the show. Some help, gang.

Talk about the left hand not knowing what the right hand does: poor Sandi Austin (Atari User Group support chairwoman). She would tell us one thing ("the check is in the mail"), and Atari management would do another ("the check has been awaiting approval on Mel's desk for three weeks"). Having that advance money sure would have helped, but hey, this wouldn't have been Atari's gamble, then. Atari, don't keep your own people in the dark. Help them be honest with us users!

To lead you into thinking this was a problem filled show would be wrong. With great cooperation from Cynthia Sieders and the Hilton Hotel staff, we pulled off a great show. "This is one of the best shows we've attended so far," was heard from Neil Harris of Atari. Does that count the show Atari themselves put on? Wow! On the other hand, these were just some of the problems that arise when putting on an AtariFest. Problems that shouldn't have to happen. We were enriched from the show, the guys who won the ST and Casio keyboard were greatful, and in short, everyone else had a good time.

If you want more detail on the good and bad aspects of this show, we'll be more than happy to give future show sponsors some insight. Leave a message on our BBS (313 978-1685), or call our voice line at (313) 751-8291.

ATARI 800XL

8 BIT NEWS

(This is a recent reprint from a newsletter that can not be located. We are sorry to not attribute the article, but we tried....)

INDUS & CPM...

Ever since acquiring my Indus disc drive, I've been curious about the Future Systems upgrade which promises the purchaser the use of CP/M programs. Accordingly, I'm reprinting in its entirety, the following review of same by Richard Coate of BRACE as it was printed in the May 1987 issue of Puget Sound Atari News:

First of all, what is CP/M ? CP/M stands for 'Control Program for Microcomputers'. It was developed by Digital Research so that the same software could be made to run on a number of different computers. Because of this universality it was a very popular operating system, and literally thousands of programs were written to take advantage of it. Many of these programs are in the public domain and are of very high quality. Until very recently, the only way to use CP/M on the Atari was to buy an ATR8000, which is fairly expensive. Now people who own Indus disk drives can also use this operating system.

I bought the Rana Charger board for my drive over a year ago when Indus was offering them for $50 in the hopes that some user would be able to write the software to enable the Indus to run CP/M. They hoped in vain however, because most Atari users know squat about the Z-80 (the CPU in the Indus) in general, or CP/M specifically. Although the promised software (vaporware?) never materialized the card was nice to have anyway. It sure speeded up disk IO.

Then, about six months ago Future Systems, who bought out Indus, announced that they had developed the necessary software. The price was reasonable, but I thought that the availablility of software might be a problem (CP/M disk format and Atari disk format are not compatible), so I decided to pass. Then they came out with a utility to transfer CP/M files to Atari format and vice-versa. Now, if nothing else, I could download the programs from a BBS and transfer them to CP/M format. So I dashed off a check and eagerly waited for the package to arrive. Soon UPS dropped it off at my front door and I was all set.

The package comes with very complete documentation on CP/M, a CP/M boot disk for the Indus, and a disk with a terminal program for the Atari so that it can communicate properly with the Indus. Also included is the latest revision of DOS XL, with an update to Synchromesh that engages during the boot process so DOS will load at the fast rate.

The terminal program that comes with the program uses a 40 column "window" on an 80 column document, so you have to horizontally scroll through the page to see all the text. This sounded clumsy to me so I also ordered an 80 column terminal program that uses a graphics 8 screen and small characters to fit 80 columns on the screen at once. This cost extra, as did the file conversion utility, and I feel they should both have been a part of the original package.

So far I have only used the 80 colum terminal because I am quite happy with it. The display can be a little hard to read at times but it is basically pretty good. A monochrome monitor would probably help and I wouldn't recommend it at all with a TV. My only real complaints with the terminal program is that there is no way to quit back to DOS, and it can't use the extra memory of an XE as a RAM disk. Those would have been real nice touches.

The CP/M boot disk contains all the files that you need to make CP/M work, but nothing else. Since just having the files for CP/M is like having an Atari with DOS and nothing else, it would have been nice if they would have included a few public domain programs to get you started. The first thing I did was duplicate the disk. This can be done with one drive, but is MUCH easier with two. (The second drive doesn't have to be an Indus.) Even with two drives the process of copying files is very slow. In fact, any time you access another drive with CP/M it is very slow. I later learned through experimentation that even though the Atari can't access the CP/M files, it is perfectly capable of sector copying a CP/M disk, which is much faster than using CP/M to dupe them.

Using CP/M is a lot like using DOS XL. Some of the commands are different, and the Drives are labeled A,B,C instead of 1,2,3, but the format is basically the same. Like DOS XL most of the commands have to be loaded from disk. CP/M boots up very quickly, and any operations that don't involve other drives are also very quick. CP/M comes with a Z-80 editor and debugger for those who are into machine language, and I imagine that some smart people could make the Indus do some pretty amazing things. So far, most of the few programs I've accumulated are games, but I also have a Basic compiler and I plan to try that out soon. I'd like to get my hands on a word processor to see if what's available for CP/M is any better than what is available for the Atari.

CP/M can't do anything the Atari can't, but it is fun to play around with. At the $49.95 I paid for it (I already had the RAM card) I feel that it was well worth it. It costs $129.00 if you need the RAM card and I don't know if I would pay that much for it. The 80 column terminal program and the file conversion utility each cost $29.95, but you can probably talk them into a discount if you buy it all at once. All of the above can be had from: Future Systems; 9811 Owensmouth Ave. Suite 9; Chatsworth, CA

ST Notes

ST Notes
By LeRoy Valley (TAG)

Well, I'm sitting here looking out the window and I see cold winds blowing, fall colors on the trees, and I can't help but smile. SMILE you say, don't you like warm weather. Well yes, I do, but the cold weather simply gives me another reason (my wife would call it an excuse) to sit in front of my computer and play. And I have been playing the last month...a LOT.

Although Michtron's Disk Utilities for the Atari ST have been around a long time, I can't ever remember seeing an in depth review of them. And I know that there hasn't been a review of their latest update -- version 2.0. This month we'll take a look at some of the goodies this package has to offer, along with some of the possible uses for said goodies.

Looking at the disk supplied by the folks at Michtron, you'll find that it contains a variety of programs. They include the main utility program (MUTIL), a formatter (FORMAT), a screen utility (SNAPSHOT), and two copy programs (MCOPY and MIDUPE).

FORMAT formats a disk with 10 sectors per track, giving the user 400K on a single sided disk and 800K on a double sided disk. This program does what about two dozen other public domain programs do, but doesn't include things like fast format or 82 tracks (for 410K or 820K). However it's a nice formatter and will be especially appreciated by those who don't have a modem or access to a user group.

SNAPSHOT is a desktop accessory that allows you to capture the current screen at any time in a Degas file. You'll see how handy this utility can be as we get into MUTIL a little later. It's also handy for capturing that stunning startup screen on your favorite game!

The two copy utilities are not really fancy, just convenient. MCOPY allows you to read in a disk that has less than 150K on it and makes multiple copies VERY quickly. It achieves this by only copying and formatting those sections of the disk that are actually used by the program. Great utility if you need to mass produce your latest creation. MIDUPE is included to quickly copy disks formatted with the FORMAT program mentioned above. It will handle just about any format and even handles some copy protected software. It will not, however, handle any of the newer copy protection schemes.

OK, it's time to get down to the meat of this review. I didn't buy Michtron Utilities for all of those programs mentioned above (although they are nice for FREE!), I just wanted a good set of disk utilities. Not wanting to waste your time and make you read this review all the way through just to find out if it's any good or not, I'll tell you right away -- I ended up with an excellent set of disk utilities! Now that that's out of the way, read on to find out what Michtron Utilities has to offer...

The main program MUTIL is GEM based and is NOT copy protected. It runs fine from a hard drive or a folder and there's no resource file to worry about. Double clicking on MUTIL.PRG brings up a GEM screen with drop down menus labeled DESK, MODIFY, SECTOR, and ATTRIBUTES. As with most GEM programs, the DESK option is simply a "credit" screen listing the program name and the author, Timothy Purves.

Under MODIFY we find three options -- VIEW DISK, VIEW FILE, and QUIT. Selecting VIEW DISK will bring up a window of current available drives. Using the mouse you simply point at the drive which you want to see and click. You are now looking directly at data on the disk starting at track 0 sector 1. The screen displays 256K of data at a time, so it requires two screens to view an entire sector. The screen is split up into two sections, one displaying hex data and the other ascii. By clicking on a value in either the hex or ascii section you can modify that value as desired.

At the bottom of the screen is what I would call the "control" area. Here all of your selections are made and information is presented in a well laid out manner. There is a "cursor at" line showing you your current position along with the hex, binary, decimal, and ascii equivalents of the current character. Very handy indeed. Directly below and to the left are the track and sector slider bars. These slider bars show your current track and sector, and you can use the arrows at either end to move one track or sector at a time, or you can grab the indicator and drag it to the desired area. Another nice feature is the ability to click on the word "track" or "sector" and type in the desired number directly! By the way, if you look at a hard drive, you won't see the track and sector sliders, you'll only see the sector slider. Michtron offers you two ways in which to VIEW DISK, track or relative. Track mode shows you the track number and the sector number shown is with respect to that track number. Thus, on a single sided disk, you would see sectors 1 through 9 on track 0, then sectors 1 through 9 on track 1, etc. In relative mode the track slider goes away and you will see sectors 1 through 720. Relative mode is automatically enabled for a hard drive, since a hard drive doesn't have tracks.

To the right of the sliders are four buttons -- Search, Continue, Relative, Exit. The Exit

button (obviously) exits you from this screen. The search button allows you to search for any string (hex or ascii!). The entire disk will be searched until the string is found. After the first occurrence is found, the Continue button allows you find other occurrences. The Relative button allows you switch to relative mode. Once selected, the button will say Track.

The screen layout just described is very well thought out and gives a lot of information without cluttering up the display. The VIEW FILE option uses this very same screen, the only difference being that you can look directly at a file. In VIEW FILE you are automatically set to relative mode, since you don't know if the file is contiguous on the disk or not. MUTIL simply shows a 100 sector file as sectors 1 through 100. Clicking on VIEW FILE brings up a file selector box, and after selecting a file, the file is displayed in the same manner as described above.

Now that you've got that screen up there with all that data, wouldn't it be nice to get a hard copy? Well, Michtron Utilities provides you with three methods of capturing your data. First, you can always do an Alt-Help and do a screen dump. Since this takes a good deal of time, Michtron has thoughtfully provided an ascii screen dump that simply dumps the relevant data to the printer...FAST! The final method involves using the desk accessory SNAPSHOT and capturing the current screen in a Degas file. Now you can manipulate the picture with your favorite paint program and perhaps use it in demonstrations or print it out at a later time.

Taking a look at the SECTOR menu we find a variety of options: Relative Mode, Track Mode, Copy Sectors, Verify Sectors, Format Tracks, and Clear Sectors. The first two options, Relative and Track Mode, simply allow you to select the default mode that Michtron Utilities will operate in. The Copy Sectors option allows you to copy sectors from anywhere to anywhere. Verify Sectors will check any sectors that you designate and will flag any unusable or damaged sectors. This is extremely helpful when you are trying to recover a damaged disk. You can find the damaged sectors, then copy the good ones to another disk and see if any of your files are usable. Format Tracks does exactly that -- formats individual tracks...9 sector format only however, sigh. The last option, Clear Sectors, is meant for clearing all unused sectors. Using this option will make the recovery of a deleted file impossible. Unfortunately, while Clear Sectors does work, it doesn't clean up the FAT when it's done. Now THAT would be nice! Are you listening Michtron?

The last menu, ATTRIBUTES, has only two options -- File Attributes and Disk Usage. File Attributes allows you change various characteristics of a file such as name, date, and time. You can also change system attributes related to the file like whether it's hidden, whether it's a system or normal file, and whether it's read only. File Attributes even allows you to recover a deleted file or change the volume label on the disk! As you can see, this menu item will probably see the most use.

Selecting File Attributes and the desired drive brings up an expanded version of the file selector box. Each file on the disk is listed along with size in bytes, date and time of creation, starting cluster number, and starting sector number. Previously deleted files are shown with a question mark as the first character in the file name. Selecting a good file will simply bring up a menu box which allows you to change any of the attributes listed above. Clicking on deleted file allows you to attempt to recover it. If you haven't written anything to the disk since you deleted the file, it'll work every time (BIG improvement over the earlier version -- I could never get it to work!). If you've written to the disk...Sorry.

Clicking on a volume label (you have to already have one) allows you to change it. If you formatted the disk without a label, then you can't add one. File Attributes even allows you to create two files with the same name! If you really want to hide some data, TOS only looks at the first file.

The last option available in Michtron Utilities is Disk Usage. After selecting the desired drive, you will be presented with a graphic map of the usage of disk space. Black squares represent used space and white ones represent unused space. If you've got a lot of white mixed in with the black, then your disk is fragmented, which negatively affects disk performance.

Well, as you can see, Michtron provides you with an excellent package for analyzing, modifying, and (if you're not careful) destroying your precious media. The package retails for $59.95 and is worth every penny. It does more and offers more features than other disk utility I've tried.

Last month you may have noticed that my column was a little short. It wasn't my fault. No really, some of the material was cut to make room for another article. So here's the remaining tidbits:

Looking for a nice way to store some of your more popular sounds for your Casio CZ-1, CZ-101, CZ-1000, CZ-3000, or CZ-5000? The EZ-CZ cartridge by Micro-W Distributing might be just the ticket. It features four banks for a total of 64 sounds and it's backed up by 2 standard AAA batteries that should last about 2 years (batteries are easily replaced). I just

purchased one and it works great on my CZ-1000! Cost is just $45.00. Micro-W Distributing, 1342 B. Route 23, Butler, N.J. 07405. 201-838-9027.

I know, I know, you just bought a hard drive and your favorite program won't run on it because it copy protected. It's not fair right? Right! A new product by Utilities Unlimited removes the protection from 100 programs. So far it seems to work on most of the 100 listed in it's menu (programs like Time Bandits, Super Cycle and N-Vision) but but there's a few (like Hippo and Haba products) that it just doesn't seem to work on. Anyhow, Music Studio now works just fine on my hard drive. All this for $29.95. Utilities Unlimited, P.O. Box 70, Brush Prairie, WASHINGTON 98606. 206-254-6530.

Well, that's it for this month. Tune in next month when we'll look at a great program (I think) for designing new fonts for Publishing Partner. See ya later!

Telecom

What's it like to run a BBS?
by Randy Pearson

That has to be the most dreaded question a caller can ask a SysOp. I mentioned, in an earlier article, that you SHOULD ask a SysOp this question, to see what kind of answer you'll get. And if you did, I'll bet your reply was something like this: "Uh, well...Um, it's...well, it's fun.... Yea, fun... But tough... Yea, tough...So, how's that ingrown toenail of yours doing?"

Most System Operators tend to shy away from that question, because it's not easily answered. But what the heck, let me take a crack at the question, "What's it like, being a SysOp?".

Well, for starters, it can be incredibly time consuming, if you let it. A BBS can easily eat up all your spare time, what with getting new programs/text files for people to download/read, writing messages, chatting with new users, etc. It should be understandable that being the SysOp, you are solely responsible for the well-being of your board. You really have to put new files on your board every now and again because, obviously, once a person has read/downloaded all he wants, he won't spend as much time around your place. So that is one big thing that you must do, or, if you are lucky, you might be able to con a user into doing it for you, by giving him the distinction of being called the Co-SysOp. (Of course, my Co-SysOps are lazier than I am, so, unfortunately, I still do most of my own work.)

I also find that if I don't call my own board for a week or so, the message base tends to die out. Being SysOp, a good share of the messages are for me. I have a good 'nucleus' of users in my message base, but even they become a bit lax when I'm not around.

As for chatting with users, that is not a necessity for running a good BBS. It IS rather fun, certainly, but chatting is the single most important thing to keep your eye on! Think about it: If three people call and all page you, and you chat with them all for a decent amount of time, you've just seen, maybe, three hours of your life zip by. Believe me, time flies when your typing away. And not only is that time you've lost, but it's also time that others have lost. There have been too many occasions where, after ending an hour long chat, someone has immediately called, paged, and asked, "Man, why has your board been busy for the past hour???" It tends to piss people off, you know. Another thing I found about chatting, is that when you do so, especially with young kids who don't understand the concept of bulletin boards, they will usually call back within the hour, page you a 153 times, then write you a message saying, "Why won't you chat with me? You hate me, right?" Don't laugh, it's happened before. Far too many times. I even got a voice call at 1:30am from a disgruntled female caller.

The amount of time you need to spend of your board also depends on the type of BBS program you decide to use. There are BBS programs that are virtually self maintaining, and others that need to be watched like a baby playing with the electric carving knife. When I first started my BBS, I used the Bulletin Board Construction Set (BBCS), which is a time consuming program, not only to keep running, but to GET running in the first place. It took me a number of weeks to finally get BBCS working the way I wanted it. But anyway, BBCS, and other similar programs, take a lot more maintenance than others. For one, the message base is set up as a large file. You had to set the size you wanted your message base to be, and when it would fill up, it wouldn't let anybody else write messages until you went in and compacted the file. But before you could do that, you had to go through the base, and delete old messages! Now that could take anywhere from a half hour to two hours, depending on how picky you are. In relation, the program I use now, Nite Lite, has a scrolling type message base, so when a new message is entered, the message at the other end of the base 'falls off' to make room. Thus, making my job a lot easier.

But, on the converse, Nite Lite's userlog is not self maintaining, where BBCS's was. People who call now have to apply for a password, then I put them in the userlog. So I can't get too lazy about calling my own board, or new users

start to wonder what's going on. But I do like that better than BBCS's userlog setup, where it would automatically put the callers in the userlog, since now, if some weirdo calls up with a name like "The Leopard," he won't be able to do any 'damage.' Call me paranoid, but I make things a lot tougher on myself by calling about 75% of the new callers, to make sure they are who they say they are. It is more time spent on my board, but I feel better, and safer, about doing it.

So, if you have a completely self-maintaining BBS program, and can get yourself a good Co-SysOp, you can cut down the amount of time you spend on your BBS to nearly nil. But, if you never bother to make an appearance on your own board, others will quickly tire of it. If you never write messages, people will think, "Well heck, why should I bother?" You have to understand that it IS your board, and you are the only person who really cares whether or not your board is up. No matter how loyal users can be, you pay the bills, so they have no real stake in the board.

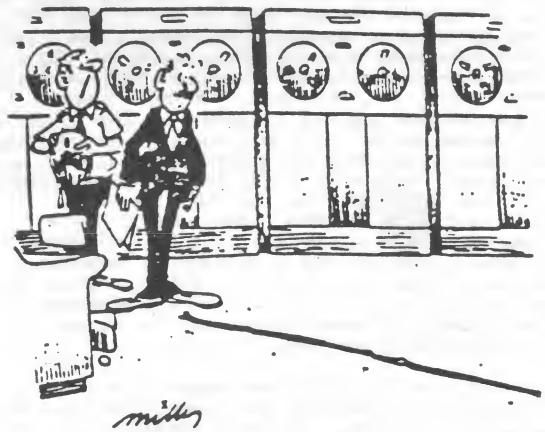
Another negative aspect I've noticed is how much of a thankless job running a BBS can be. Do you realize that out of the over 225 users I currently have, I'd say less then 15 of them call at all regularly, and that's being very generous. There are maybe another 20 that I know I'll see every so often, and another 20 that'll call back within a month or two. And on the flip side, there are at LEAST 120 callers who never even called back once I validated their access! Can you imagine that? That's over half of the people that never bothered to call again, and I know that I'm being overly generous in MY favor! I've probably had well over 500 callers in my 2 years, so you can see how many were deleted because I never saw them again. So, if you're easily depressed by numbers like that, SysOping is not for you.

But at the same time, there is little that is more rewarding than seeing your first caller, after spending weeks getting your board set up and put online. It is great to get logoff comments from people saying, "Wow, this is a really great board!" I think my biggest thrill was when I read a rather touching public message, on my board, from the Ingham County Commissioner. He had been a regular for a couple months when he wrote me, saying that, being so busy, he had limited his BBS calling to only two boards, mine and the Political Forum!

So, maybe I don't get a lot of repeat customers, but the few people who do frequent my board are among the most creative, interesting, funny people I've ever met! See, SysOping is a marvelous way to meet people. In real life, before I became a SysOp, I was a nobody. Just an unpopular loner. But now, I have a lot of very interesting friends, and I met them through my board. I even met my last girlfriend that way. I love to have a place to not only put up my own stories and humor, but other callers' writings, not to mention just other good files. I will go out of my way to get my users the best entertainment. I'll spend long distance money to call other boards to get files, even go so far as borrowing a friend's Compuserve account. Just recently, I subscribed to PC Pursuit for the same reason. I've stayed up until 8am before, perfecting an update of the board. Sure, I may be cursing a lot, but I can't describe the feeling of accomplishment to finally see it working, and to see a caller look around, and leave with a, "good job!" logoff comment.

So, think about what I said before putting up your own board. And I cannot emphasize enough my feelings on people who, after calling one BBS, decide to put up their own board. I honestly think that, in order to be able to handle the strange situations that will pop up, you must understand how the BBS community works. There are many, many different personalities out there, and they can clash very strongly in this medium.

In conclusion, if you can handle the basic thanklessness you'll get from most people, and can make a LOT of time to make your board how you want, and more importantly keep it that way, you'll find that the few good times will stick out in your mind more than the bad ones!



"HE'S GOT THE INFORMATION YOU WANT . . . YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE ANY TROUBLE FINDING HIM."

Review

The Atari ST for Beginners
by R. Luers and Michael Stein
Review by Peter Miller

This well-written book is addressed to people who have little experience using computers and who are starting to use their own ST. It is published by Abacus as part of a series of many books dealing with various topics pertaining to Atari ST computers. I infer that the big number 1 on the spine of the book refers to its place in this series. The text refers the reader to other books in the series for more information about specific topics.

The first two chapters cover "Setting up & connecting the ST" and "Working with the ST". The information here is similar to that presented in the Owner's Manual for the ST but with added description, more pictures and more examples in some cases. The paragraphs on operation of the standard desk accesories (Control Panel, VT52 Emulator and Install Printer) contain helpful additional information, such as "set Pixels/line to 960 and Quality to Final when using Epson printers for screen dumps" (to print the whole screen), and use of Esc or Backspace to erase character fields in selector boxes, as when setting the time, etc.

Chapters 3 and 4 are introductions to ST BASIC and LOGO, respectively. These chapters tell you in tutorial fashion what to do to load the language program and to enter and try out simple programs in each. The chapter on ST BASIC covers working with windows, PRINT and INPUT, GOTO, IF...THEN...ELSE, FOR..NEXT loops, GOSUB...RETURN and REM statements. The discussion of the different types of variables available in ST BASIC is a very helpful supplement to the ST BASIC Sourcebook provided with the Language Disk. Graphics commands, such as CIRCLE, ELLIPSE, LINEF, PCIRCLE are demonstrated with the hint that you will have to experiment with the pixel counts, depending on the screen resolution. Five programs at the end of the chapter work with text and numbers (no graphics) to show the reader how to get started writing his own programs.

Chapter 4 on the LOGO language develops a vocabulary of commands and gives an outline for debugging programs. Usage is illustrated by short programs visible in the pictures of the computer monitor, which also show the resulting graphics pattern.

Chapter 5 starts with some background about computers and components, binary numbers and differences among various kinds of memory chips. After this there are brief sections on peripherals and options for the ST, describing what types of devices can be plugged into the various connectors on the back and sides of the ST. (The cartridge port is not mentioned.)

I found interesting the table in Appendix A which gives the correspondence between control key combinations and the address of the character (0-255) in the Atari character set. Some characters have more than one key combination assigned. The full character set is pictured in a 16x16 matrix. Appendix B contains 8 short BASIC programs for converting numbers from one base to another, e.g. binary to decimal. Appendix C is a glossary of computer terms, and Appendix D is two and a half pages of BASIC error messages with suggestions of what to do when the message appears.

This book is the sort of thing that many beginners are looking for. I would expect copies placed in Atari club libraries to be read and appreciated by new and prospective ST owners. It is clear and easy to read. The structure of the text is apparent to the reader. Many illustrations are presented effectively, adjacent to the relevant text. This book teaches the fundamentals it covers quickly and easily. After you read it you are better equipped to understand the language reference books provided with your ST.

Industry Report

RAISING PHONE FEES FOR COMPUTER NETWORK USERS
(Combined Reports)
Oct. 5, 1987

FCC Chairman Dennis R. Patrick said Friday that a proposal to raise telephone fees for computer network users is based on fairness. But users say the plan would crush the fledgling industry.

In testimony before the House Energy and Commerce Telecommunications subcommittee, Patrick said the proposal would charge computer users the same fees now paid by long-distance callers.

Home computer users, say the added costs would force many of them off the computer networks they use to communicate with electronic databases across the country -- exchanging information on electronic bulletin boards, checking stock market reports, making airline reservations, and exchanging public domain computer programs.

"This would severely retard the coming of the information age," said Allan Conner, president of DunsNet, a company of the Dun & Bradstreet Corp.

The implications of the proposal extend far beyond home computer users.

Schools would be forced to cut back their use of electronic data bases for research, said John Stuckey, director of academic computing at Northeastern University.

Cutbacks also would be forced at hospitals, where doctors rely on computerized medical data bases for quick reference, said Jacquelline Bastille, director of the medical library at Massachusetts General Hospital.

"This is a vital service," she said. "Access to biomedical information is needed quickly. Same-day retrieval is critical to quality patient care."

"This is a genuine threat to our society," said Rep. Edward J. Markey, D-Mass., subcommittee chairman.

LONE WITNESS DEFENDS PROPOSAL

FCC Chairman Dennis R. Patrick, the lone witness defending the proposal, said government regulators see the issue as one of fairness -- everyone who uses the local phone network should pay the costs of maintaining it.

"If we exempt one category of users, that means another category of users will have to pay more," he said. "It's not clear to me it is appropriate in an equity sense if it increases the amount borne by low-income voice users."

Patrick estimated the access charges on information service providers would reduce long-distance rates by about 1 percent.

"We want to see the (computer) networks evolve in response to the economics of the marketplace ... not in response to subsidies," he said.

Rep. Edward J. Markey, D-Mass., subcommittee chairman, noted the strong opposition to the proposal from computer users who have sent him more than 4,000 letters.

The FCC, when it adopted the access charge system in 1982, exempted information service providers from the fees because of the fear that the new industry would not withstand the sudden increase in costs.

Now, the FCC believes, it may be time to lift the exemption, but the agency has found scant support for that conclusion. Even some of the local Bell operating companies, which receive the access charges, have reacted with only lukewarm support.

SHARE THE LINE

Users also cite that phone companies combine such electronic calls so that several of them may be transmitted over the same telephone line. Since standard (voice) calls cannot be combined this way, users claim that several users would be charged for the same call.

The proposal would add about $4.50 an hour to the cost of hooking up to information services. For some of the lower-priced services, the additional cost would more than double the hourly rates.

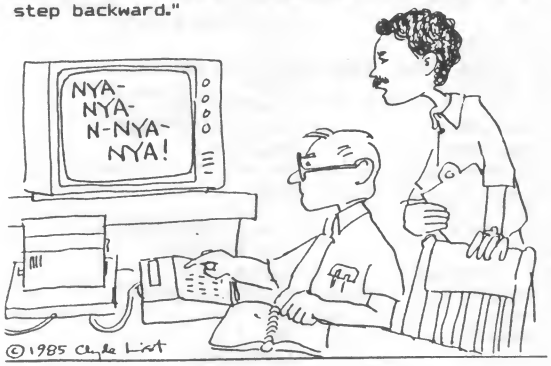
Floyd H. Trogdon, vice president of Telenet Communications Corp., a computer network that connects computer users with information data bases, said the access charges would raise some of its off-peak rates by 500 percent. He estimated that the access charges from the computer industry would lower long-distance rates by less than one half of one percent.

Computer users said electronic information services are already paying their share of phone network costs in a flat-rate surcharge per customer.

Using one of the more than 15,000 electronic billboards on computer networks throughout the country, a computer user with a question about how to handle a tax matter, for example, can dial into a network, pose the question in a message and post it on such a billboard. Readers scanning the different messages can answer the question, posting their message in the same way.

"That kind of interaction happens on the order of every five seconds throughout the United States," tenEyck said.

He added, "One of the ways to make the technology more affordable is to increase the size of the market. Reducing the market is a step backward."



"HMMM- THAT *IS* A NASTY BUG YOU HAVE THERE!"

ST Technical

This message was taken from the Iron Works BBS (408) 257-7147

Date: 10-25-87
From: ANDY NICOLA
Subj: MEGA DEAD LIST

Here is the list of programs which will not load or are otherwise non-functional in 'my' Mega. These titles are not in any order. For the most part I received exceptions with either 2 or 4 bombs. The others simply would not load due to copy protection techniques or other reasons not discernable.

TITLE	COMPANY
GFL FOOTBALL	ACTIVISION
H & D FORTH	MIRAGE CONCEPTS
PHANTASIE	S.S.I.
PINBALL	MICHTRON
WRESTLING	EPYX
SOLITAIR	SOFTLOGIK
ARCTIC FOX	ELECTRONIC ARTS
CHAMPIONSHIP BASEBALL	ACTIVISION
WORD WRITER 2.0	TIMEWORKS
TEMPLE OF APSHAI	TRILOGY EPYX
SHANHAI	ACTIVISON
SPACE PILOT	PARADOX
SPACE STATION	PARADOX
ST KARATE	PARADOX
RENEGADE	MASTERTRONICS
NINJA	MASTERTRONICS
OGRE	ELECTRONIC ARTS
SILENT SERVICE	MICROPROSE
ST POOL	SHELBOURNE
HIGH ROLLER	MINDSCAPE
FINAL WORD	MARK OF THE UNICORN
K SWITCH	ANTIC/KUMA
REGENT BASE	REGENT
HIPPO SIMPLE	HIPPOPOTAMUS
HOLE-IN-ONE-GOLF	ARTWORX
DECIMAL DUNGEON	UNICORN
FRACTION ACTION	UNICORN
SKY FOX	ELECTRONIC ARTS
SUPER CYCLE	EPYX
IASS TIMES TONE TOWN	ACTIVISION
HABA SPELL	HABA
TEXT-PRO	ABACUS
COLOUR SPACE	ANTIC/LLAMASOFT
PRO-FORTRAN 77	PROSPERO
MACRO ASSEMBLER	METACOMCO
HIPPO-C	HABA
L.D.W. BASIC	L.D.W.
GOLDEN PATH	FIREBIRD/RAINBIRD
CHAT 2.0	SST SYSTEMS
OMEGA TERMINAL	SUPRA CORP.
GFA DRAFT	MICHTRON/GFA
CZ PATCH	DR. T's
DX HEAVEN	DR. T's
PARTNER ST	TIMEWORKS
VIP	DITEK LTD.
VIP - GEM VERSION	ISD MARKETING
PUBLISHING PARTNER	SOFTLOGIK
ARKANOID	SILICON BEACH SOFTWARE
CHESSMASTER 2000	ELECTRONIC ARTS
PSION CHESS	PSION/ATARI
TECHMATE	SZABO/MICHTRON
ELECTRA-SPELL	ABACUS
MICHTRON BBS	MICHTRON
KINDERAMA	UNICORN
HOMEWORK HELPER-MATH	SPINNAKER
HIPPO ALMANAC	HIPPO
LITTLE COMP. PEOPLE	ACTIVISION
BUZZWORD	BUZZWORD GAME CO.
CARDIAC ARREST	SIONE
MENU+	METACOMCO
ST SCRUNCH	CHERRY SOFTWARE
K-RESOURCE	KUMA
BOS 5	BOS NATIONAL
POWER EDIT	POWER SYSTEMS
POWER ASSIST	POWER SYSTEMS
POWER VISION	POWER SYSTEMS
BASIC-M	PHILON
HENRY'S FUNDAMENTAL	BASIC PHILON
POWER PRINT	ALPHA SYSTEMS
MAGIC SAC 4.36	DATA PACIFIC
HABAWRITER	HABA
BUSINESS LETTERS	HABA
WILLS	HABA
HABADEX PHONEBOOK	HABA
HABAVIEW	HABA
MICRO KITCHEN COMP.	FTL
GFA BASIC - 2.0	MICHTRON/GFA
K - ROGET	KUMA
KNIGHT ORC	LEVEL 9 COMPUTING
JEWELS OF DARKNESS	LEVEL 9 COMPUTING
PHA$AR	MARKSMAN TECHNOLOGY
DOLLARS & $ENSE	MONOGRAM
AIRBALL	MICHTRON/MICRODEAL
MARK WILLIAMS C	MARK WILLIAMS CO.
G.I.S.T. SOUND EDITOR	ANTIC
MUSIC STUDIO	ACTIVISION
N-VISION	AUDIO LITE
ISGUR PORTFOLIO	BATTERIES INCLUDED
STACCOUNTS	ISD MARKETING
SWORD OF KADASH	PENGUIN SOFTWARE
ST WARS MILES	COMPUTING
MACRO MANAGER	BLUE MOON SOFTWARE
MACRO DESK	BLUE MOON SOFTWARE
SIKEY	SHANNER INTERNATIONAL
ACTION PAK	ACTION SOFTWARE

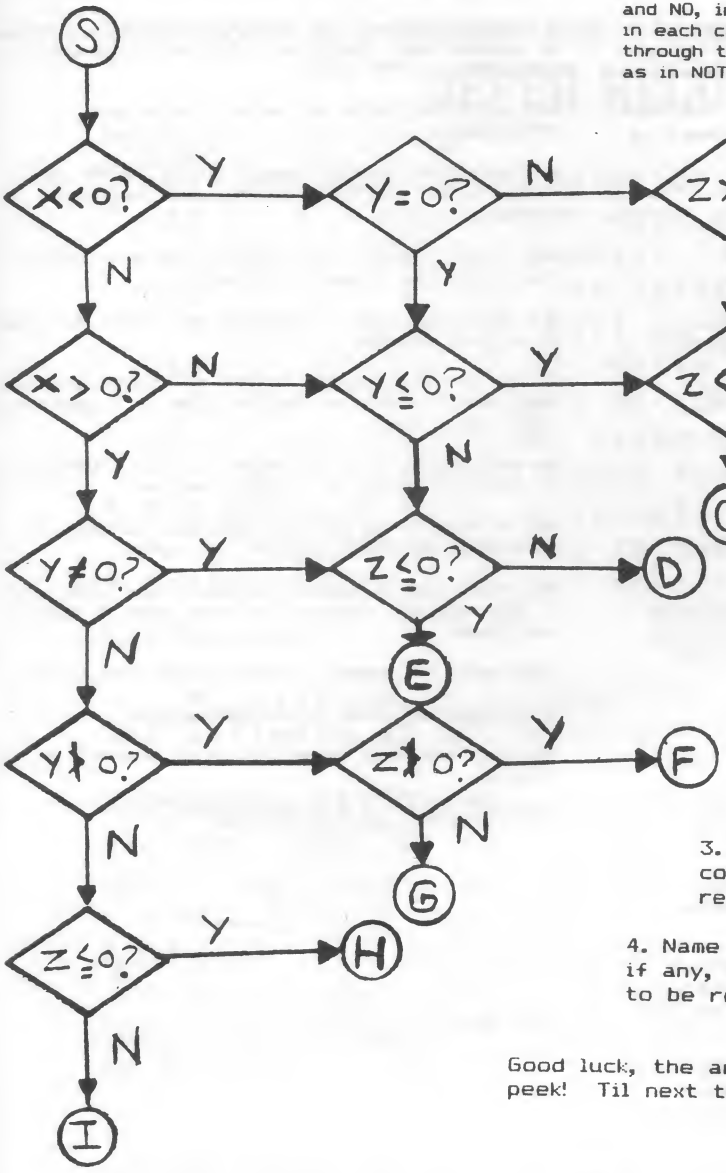
94 Titles in this list with 15 others currently in testing in conjunction with the software publishers. Total = 109 out of 659 tested. Incompatibility ratio = 16.5% These 'full feature' tests were conducted over the last 2 months. I can truthfully say that I have done more with my MEGA in the last 2 months than most people will do with them in the next 2 years!! Anyone disputing my claim here is free to call me regarding my method of testing, integrity of file tested and whether or not my MEGA machine is performing as per Atari's specifications.

Andy Nicola
216-779-4237 MEGA IV BBS

FUNSTUFF

DECISIONS!
by Guy A. Hurt (C.H.A.O.S.)

My Puzzle for this month's M.A.M. is a FLOWCHART. After you study the chart, see if you can answer the questions below. The flowchart begins at CONNECTOR "S" and the "Y" and "N" outside each decision box stand for YES and NO, indicating the DIRECTION you should go in each condition. Operators with a BAR through them mean, of course, NOT (operator)... as in NOT GREATER THAN shown as $\not>$.



QUESTIONS:

1. If X=0, what CONNECTOR(s), if any, could be reached?

2. In general, what conditions, if any, must be TRUE if CONNECTOR A is reached?

3. If $X \neq 0$, $Y \leqq 0$, and $Z > 0$, what connectors, if any, might be reached?

4. Name a set of values for X, Y, and Z, if any, that would be allow CONNECTOR I to be reached.

Good luck, the answers are on page 19, but don't peek! Til next time, LET IT FLOW...

Last Hacks

As you know, this is the last issue of MAM to come out of Lansing. Patty and Bill Rayl of Ann Arbor will begin publishing with the December issue.

So, as we jump over to the other side, where we can call and ask:

Where's the newsletter?
Why wasn't my article published?
Who edited my article?
Is your spell checker broken?
etc, etc, etc...

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A 3 year supply of upcoming deadlines which must be met.....or else.

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The latest list of instructions for bulk mailing that came pre-stamped "obsolete".

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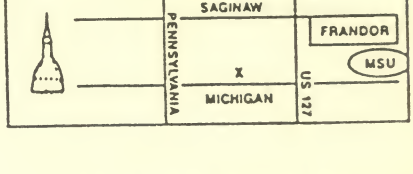

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